by S. Palmer

THE

# Plotters Doom.

WHEREIN

The Wicked PLOTS, PLOTTERS, and their Confederates, are Detected and ſentenced by the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

In a Late

# SERMON

UPON THE

# Helliſh Plots

Which have been diſcovered in theſe Nations.

And may be

An Anſwer to Mr. H's late SERMON

UPON

## *CURSE YE MEROZ.*

*By a ſincere Proteſtant, and true Son of the Church.*

Laudatur ab his culpatur ab illis.

Prov. 21. 30. *There is no wiſdom nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord.*

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Cf. Observations on ... Curse ye Meroz 1680

# The Plotters Doom, &c.

## PSAL. XXXVII. 12.

*The wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and gnaſheth upon him with his teeth.*

THIS *Pſalm* carries in it the Character of all the men in the world; for there are but two ſorts of perſons that the world has in it, the Godly and the Ungodly, or the Righteous and the wicked; and here you have the Character of both. And they are all along put by way of Antitheſis, and very often in the ſame verſe. As verſe 21, *The wicked borroweth and payeth not again: but the righteous ſheweth mercy and giveth.* And ſo in the 17th verſe, *The arm of the wicked ſhall be broken, but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.*

My Text is part of the Character of the wicked; and becauſe Plots are now grown to be all the faſhion, I have choſen as faſhionable a Text as I could. In which we have theſe three General Parts:

1. The *Perſons Plotting.*
2. The *Perſons againſt whom they Plot.*
3. The *Carriage or comportment of the Plotters.*

1. The Perſons plotting, *The wicked plotteth.*
2. The Perſons againſt whom they plot, and that is *againſt the juſt.*
3. The carriage or comportment of the Plotters, *They gnaſh upon them with their teeth.*

Of theſe through Gods aſſiſtance, and your Chriſtian patience, I ſhall ſpeak in their order, as the time will permit. And firſt of the firſt.

I. The Perſons plotting, the wicked; *The wicked plotteth.*

How many ways evil men are called *wicked* in the Sacred Scriptures, would be an inquiry too long, as alſo too fine and curious for our preſent Diſcourſe; for you find them call'd ſo upon many accounts.

Idolaters are ſtiled ſo, *Deut.* 17. 5.

Oppreſſors, *Exod.* 9. 27. *The Lord is righteous* (ſays *Pharoah*) *but I and my people are wicked.*

Perſecutors are alſo call'd wicked, *Pſal.* 10. 2. *The wicked in his pride doth perſecute the poor.*

Rebels; and ſo you find *Corah* and his fellows [though of the Clergy] are call'd wicked with a witneſs, *Numb.* 16. 26. *Depart I pray ye* (ſays *Moſes* to the Congregation) *from the tents of theſe wicked men, leſt you be conſumed in all their ſins.*

The unmerciful and cruel are alſo termed ſo by *Solomon*, Prov. 12. 10. *The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*

Nay a greater than *Solomon*, our Saviour himſelf calls the uncompaſſionate wicked, *Mat.* 18. 32. *O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all thy debt, becauſe thou deſireſt me; ſhouldeſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?*

Unjuſt Magiſtrates are alſo called wicked, *Prov.* 29. 2. *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.* And in a particular and more eminent manner unjuſt Judges, *Prov.* 17. 15.

But not to enumerate any more Particulars, let us underſtand the wicked here in this place according to the common and moſt received notion of the word, for perſons utterly void and empty of every thing that is good and virtuous, and that are repleat with vice and evil of every kind; and the words thus taken, will give us this plain and profitable Inſtruction.

*That wicked men are Plotters, and the only Plotters the world has in it.*

Plotters in Sacred Scripture are called by divers names; ſometimes they are titul'd *Conſpirators*, as in 2 *Sam.* 15. 31. *And one told David, ſaying, Achitophel is among the Conſpirators with Abſolom.*

*Solom.* And so they plotted against the Church of God of old; for 'tis said in *Nehem.* 4. 8. *That when the enemies of the Church heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made, and that the breaches began to be stopped, that then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.*

Sometimes they are termed *Forgers*, and so they plotted against the Royal Prophet, *Psal.* 119. 69. *The proud have forged a lye against me; but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.* And so exquisite are they in their forgeries, that in another place he tells you they laid to his charge things that he knew not.

Sometimes their Plots are called *devices*, and so they plotted against that great Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Come*, (say they) *let us devise devices against Jeremiah*, Jer. 18. 18. And under this term you see that hellish Massacre is put, which was designed by *Haman* against the Church of God in *Esth.* 9. 29. *But when Esther came before the King, he commanded by Letters that Hamans wicked device which he devised against the Jews should return upon his own head.* And therefore the Kingly Prophet imprecates Divine vengeance on them under this notion, *Psal.* 35. 20. *Because they devise deceitful matters against them that are at quiet in the land.*

Sometimes their Plots are called *counsels*; and under this term you find those capital Plotters are put, *Psal.* 2. 2. *The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed.* And under this notion you find them managing their Plots against the life of our blessed Lord and Saviour, *Mat.* 27. *When the morning was come all the chief Priests and Elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.* And in *Mat.* 22. 15. 'tis said, *That the Pharisees took counsel how they might intangle him in his talk.*

Again, their Plots are called *Traps*, and *Snares*, and *Nets*, in Scripture, alluding to the practice of Fowlers in their insnaring their game. *Among my people are found wicked men*, saith the Prophet *Jeremiah.* But how does their wickedness appear? why read *Chap.* 5. 26. and he resolves you, *They lay wait* (saith he) *as he that setteth snares, they set a trap, they catch men.* See what a barbarous description of these wicked Plotters, and yet extreamly true, is given you in *Psal.* 10. 7, 8, 9. *His mouth is full of cursing, and deceit, and fraud; under his tongue is mischief and vanity. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages, in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lyeth in wait secretly;*

*ſecretly as a Lion in his den; he lyeth in wait to catch the poor; he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net. Ab uno, diſce omnes*, by one the Prophet tells you the nature of them all; and one would think that this deſcription ſhould rather ſuit to a Devil than a man; and yet ſuch devilliſh men you find laid in wait for our moſt bleſſed Lord himſelf, ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his mouth that they might accuſe him, *Luk.* 11. 54.

From what hath been ſaid, the one part of the point under conſideration is clear, That the wicked are Plotters: and if the Scriptures of truth do no where tell us, that the righteous and innocent are Plotters alſo, as it no where doth, then the other part doth manifeſt it ſelf alſo, that they are the *only* Plotters that the world has in it.

A manifold improvement may be made of this truth; but I ſhall inſiſt on a fourfold only.

1. *Reproof.*
2. *Caution.*
3. *Exhortation.*
4. *Comfort.*

1. For *Reproof.* Is it ſo that this Leſſon is true, that wicked perſons are Plotters, and the only Plotters that the world has in it? then how are they to be reproved that would perſwade the people otherwiſe, and that would make men believe that there are none in the world but only ſober people are Plotters? and this *Reproof* falls on ſome of all Sects.

1. *On ſome of us Clergy.*
2. *On ſome of you Laity.*

1. *On ſome of us Clergy*, who preach ſuch Doctrines ſo utterly contrary to the tenor of the whole Scripture. What, my Brethren! is it nothing with you to be numbered among falſe teachers? lying Prophets? and to fall under that wo that they are doomed with *That call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs?* Iſa. 5. 20. Or that wo due to them that take away the righteouſneſs of the righteous from him. *verſ.* 23. What would you be devoured as the fire devoureth the ſtubble? or would you be conſumed as the flame conſumeth the chaff? would you

you be deſtroyed root and branch? for the Prophet tells you *that your very root ſhall be rottenneſs, and your bloſſom ſhall go up as the duſt.* verſ. 24. What are you earning again that dreadful Curſe, *Prov.*24. 24. *He that ſaith to the wicked, thou art righteous, him ſhall the people curſe: Nations ſhall abhor him.* For truly I doubt this very ſin did make us the Curſe of the people, and the abhorrence of the Nations once already; when we run upon our fellow Proteſtant Brethren for wicked, and cried up the wicked for righteous; and what are we mad to repeat this guilt, and to bring our ſelves under the Curſe of the people, and the abhorrence of the Nations a ſecond time? Doth the true and holy Word of God teach us every where, and in every part of the Bible that the wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and dare we invert this Doctrine? and inculcate in all our Sermons, *That the juſt plotteth againſt the wicked?* And by our ſly ſarcaſms inſinuate that we had rather be *Papiſts* than *Presbyterians*; and that there is more danger from diſſenting Proteſtants, than there is from *Papiſts* opinions? that may be become well enough the roaring Atheiſtical Royſtors, and paſs among them for good plotting Divinity: But that Miniſters that either do or ought to know better, ſhould be heard to ſpeak ſuch language, is ſtrangely ſcandalous. What, a *Papiſt!* that differs from us in the greateſt and moſt important Doctrines of the Goſpel! In Juſtification by Faith, in Mediation only by Jeſus Chriſt, and many others; is he to be judged better than a *Presbyterian* that agrees with us in all our Doctrines, and that differs only from us in a few indifferent Ceremonies? Pray conſider, and let not a peeviſh prejudice impoſe upon you ſuch ſtrange abſurdities; nor ſuffer not your hearts to tranſport you in your Pulpits to deliver ſuch extravagant Doctrines as theſe. But remember who it is that tells you, *That he that teaches men ſo, ſhall be leaſt in the Kingdom of God.*

The ſecond part of this *Reproof* falls on you Laity, that hear ſuch Doctrines, for believing them; for that which is not our duty to preach, it cannot be your duty to believe; for though you do well to give your attendance on hearing, yet you are ever to remember that you are to believe nothing that you hear, but that which hath the Word of God for its warrant. 'Tis true, faith comes by hearing; yet that hearing by which faith comes, is by the Word of God, *Rom.* 10. 17. What do you think that you are to come hither, and becauſe you hear a young pragmatical ſtripling, that's fitter to be at School than in the Pulpit, make his little declamation

mation againſt the Spirit of God, againſt the People of God, againſt the Word of God, and every thing that's holy, that you are to believe what he ſays, and go away prejudiced againſt Holineſs, Treaſuring up wrath in your mind againſt all that practice it? Or becauſe you hear a more ſtarcht and formal diſcourſe, from ſome Reverend or Dignified perſon, *That whoredoms, drunkenneſs, and all manner of debauchery, are rather to be tollerated by the Government than diſſenting Proteſtants*, Will you believe this to be Goſpel? Pray ſee what the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles ſays in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, Chap. 1. v 8. for he tells them, *That though himſelf or an Angel from heaven ſhould come and preach to them any other Goſpel*; what then? ſhould he be credited? credited! no, no; *let him be accurſed*, ſays he; and ſo ſhould you alſo ſay. And though I am as much for the Church of *England* as thoſe that crack ſo highly of their veneration for her, yet I muſt ſpeak one plain truth, that ever ſince theſe curſed Doctrines have come into our Pulpits, our Church has dwindled, and all Religion has run out of doors. And I confeſs I know no other ſervice theſe Preachers do our Church, than to prejudice all the hearers, and make the beſt of them ſheer off to the Diſſenters, and the worſt of them to the *Papiſts*, till at laſt we be left quite alone.

You are therefore to be reproved for giving heed to ſuch Fables, and believing Doctrines ſo utterly contrary to the very eſſence of a true and ſaving Faith; do not think that the command of our Lord is to go for nought, in *Mark* 4. 24. *Take heed what you hear*, Nor that in *Luk.* 8. 18. *Take heed how you hear*; for as well the matter as the manner of our hearing are both limited and reſtrained by Chriſt. For he knew well enough, what manner of youths would invade and obtrude themſelves into the Sacred Function. And what damnable Doctrines his Church would then be peſtered with. He knew well enough what a vain worſhip theſe would introduce, when once they came to that Phariſaical pitch as to teach for Doctrines the Commandments of men, *Mat.* 15. 9. and therefore cautions us before-hand ſo ſtrictly concerning them, that we ſhould be careful both of what we heard, and how we heard; that when they did come, Chriſtians might not be ſurpriz'd; for *præmunitus, præmunitus*; and pray God give us his grace to guard our ſelves againſt them.

I am not ignorant that theſe perſons here reprov'd, vogue themſelves, and would fain have the reputation to be eſteemed by others

alſo

also for Queen *Elizabeth*'s Protestants, but I doubt if we bring them to the touch, they will come nigher Queen *Maries* Papists, and that both in their Religion, and in their Civil actions. As to their Religion, if you will see a Queen *Elizabeth* Protestant, if you please to look but in the Statute-Book, in *Anno decimo tertio Elizabethæ*, and the 12*th*. Chapter, you will find a whole Parliament of them, and upon Church work too; and which is yet more, upon the Ministers of the Church; and there you read that to the end that the Churches in the Queens Majesties Dominions may be served with Pastors of sound Religions, they enact that every person under the degree of a Bishop that shall pretend to be a Minister by reason of any other form of Institution, Consecration or Ordination, than what was injoined by Parliament in the days of King *Edward* the 6*th*. or was then in use, should declare his assent, and subscribe to all the Articles of Religion, which only concern the Confession of the true Christian Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments.

Here's your tenderness of a true Queen *Elizabeth* Protestant, that let their Ordination be what it would, and their esteem for Ceremonies what it would, so they would but subscribe and assent to those Articles of Religion, that only concern'd the confession of Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments, they judg'd them of a sound Religion, and fit to be Pastors of our Church. Which I doubt these our hot-spurs would judg fitter for a Goal, if not the Gallows. By which you see that Queen *Elizabeths* Protestants judg'd it their duty to open the Church doors as wide as might be, to let honest and sound Ministers in, and not according to the mode of our times, and these Protestants here of ours, bar the doors up by their Laws, to keep them out: if they declar'd their assent to the faith and doctrines of the Church only, you see her Protestants admitted them; and would not keep them out, because they could not consent and conform to the Ceremonies thereof. No, they would not rob and deprive the Church of God of the gifts and graces, nor of the help, use, and service of so many sound and able Pastors that were Orthodox in their faith, because they could not comply with a few (I will not call them idle and useless) but I am sure very unhappy Ceremonies. So that by this you may see how much our rigid Church-men are out in their Religious measures in boasting themselves for Queen *Elizabeth*'s Protestants.

Nor will you find them less different from Q. *Elizabeth*'s Protestants

stants in their Civil concerns, than you have seen them in their Religious notions. For the Protestants in her time were circumstanced extreamly like to what we are now. For the *Papists* saw that they could not carry back the Church of *England* to *Rome*, unless they could cut Her off, and therefore all their plots and designs were calculated against Her life then, as they are against his Majesties now. Only she was blessed with a thorough belief of their villany; so that she was saved by faith, even as to her natural life. Now her Protestants perceiving there was no end of their Plots, and that first or last they would have her life, and there withal destroy the Protestant Religion also, if by some extraordinary act they did not prevent it; they did by an universal agreement enter into an Association, by which they mutually engage themselves to repair to their Arms, and stand by and assist each other in these three cases: In case of the Queens death; in case of a foreign Invasion, and in case of any Popish Insurrection. And in particular, they obliged themselves to one another, that when ever the Queen fell, they would all fall on the *Papists*, and revenge her death upon them. And this put a present end to all their Plots and designs against her for ever. For when they saw the people were come to a point, and that conspiring against the Queens life was but conspiring against their own lives, they had done with their Plottings, and could live quiet like other people all the remaining part of her life. This extraordinary Act Queen *Elizabeth*'s Protestants did of themselves, and in an Interval of Parliament; and that age was so far from condemning it, as any way factious, seditious or rebellious, that she her self in the very next Parliament, which was held *in vicessimo septimo* of her Reign, ratified, confirmed, and made it a Law, and to last as long as she lived.

Now if you compare these our Protestants (that we are here reproving) with hers in this point of Civil right, I doubt you will find them as unlike her Protestants, as but now you did in their Religion. For how barbarously did they clamor every where against their fellow Protestants the other day, but for carrying on a modest and harmless Petition for the Parliaments sitting? And how did they be-rogue and be-rebell all those worthy Gentlemen that either promoted or countenanced it? How then would they have bellowed and roared, if they had enter'd into such an honest Association as you see Queen *Elizabeth*'s Protestants did? Wherefore take the reproof home to your selves, and do not boast your

selves

elves any more for Queen *Elizabeth's* Protestants, if you be of that stamp; for you see you are so far from being of their nature, that bate but the bare name, you have nothing of her Protestants in you. And I am perswaded it were good for our Church if you had not so much as the name neither.

Thus much for Reproof. Come we now to caution.

2*ly*. Is it so that wicked men are plotters, and the only plotters the world has in it? then,

First, Be cautious of their company, lay hold on all occasions to shun and avoid it; and say with the holy Patriarch, *Gen.* 49. 6. *O my soul, come not thou into their secrets; unto their assembly my honour be not thou united.* And think with him that the safety of your honour, nay your very souls lyes in declining their company; for what would you be in their company for? you put your selves but under a constraint, and too often into a snare also. For if you speak, they deal by you as they did by the Royal Prophet, *Psal.* 56. 5. *Every day*, says he, *they wrest my words.* And indeed it is very hard for you to comport your selves in wicked company; for either you will speak too much to please them, or too little to please your selves. And if you be silent and sit with your tongue in your mouth, then you seem to assent to all they say; so that neither silent nor speaking are you safe. Wherefore resolve with the *Psalmist* to keep agreeable company; for he professes to God Almighty, *That he was a companion to all them that feared him, and of them that kept his precepts*, Psal. 119. 63. And Kings used to keep such good company as it is no disparagement to be reckon'd their companion. And think not that this caution extends it self no farther than that you should eschue the company of *Papists*; for we may truly say in our day, as St. *Paul* said in his, *They are not all Israel which are of Israel.* Not all Protestants that comes to Church. Would to God they were. But since they are not, my next wish is, would to God they would appear what they really are, and not lye sheltering themselves within the pale of our Church, and under the umbrage of Protestants, promote the Popish designs. They are easily known, for what our Lord said of these wolves in sheeps cloathing is eternally true, *by their fruits you may know them*, Mat. 7. 16. For they are of a ravenous bloody nature, and tarry among us but to teize one Protestant on another; and make one Protestant a Wolf and a Devil to another. I speak not at random, I know what I say. For look all the Country round, and you will find none

neither Magistrates nor Ministers so savage to dissenting Protestants, as those which I am now a cautioning you against; and which without any breach of Christian charity give you too sufficient reason to believe, that they can make as good *Papists* to morrow as they are Protestants to day; so that the Popes sickle is in our harvest already, and he makes these instruments of his wound the Protestants interest with their own weapons. For those very laws made against *Papists* they impudently wrest them against Protestants; and these very Justices that this day persecute them for their Nonconformity to our Church, shall if Popery were but turned Trump, burn all that do not conform to it, to morrow, as in the *Marian* days they did; for the professed *Papists* were no more able then, than they are now to destroy the Protestants. No, it was this wicked crew of masked *Papists*, that sailing in and tacking about, suckt the precious blood of all our Brethren then, as they thirst to do ours now. These, these, are the worst of wretches, and such as truly no man of an honest mind can hardly speak of them with patience; these worry some of our flock (for you must pardon me if I reckon dissenters of the Protestant flock) that they may keep their hand in ure, till their beloved time comes to butcher us all. If *Martin Luther* were alive, he would call these, the Devils Magistrates, and the Devils Ministers, not Gods. And I am sure it were happy for the Church of *England* if it had no such Magistrates nor Ministers in it. For were these but gone to their own party, true Protestants would better agree, and cement against the common enemy, than these wretches will now suffer them to do. For they know that Rule, *Divide & impera*; and therefore make one of us run upon another to keep up our rancor and hatred one against another, and the better to prepare their way, and make it easier for them to slide in their beloved interest, through our divisions, to ruin us all. Of these therefore beware as of the Devil, whose first begotten children they are. And let every true Protestant fly their company, and scorn their society with a juster indignation than a publick and profest *Papist*. For these you can guard your selves against, but there is no guard against them; for they walk with you to the House of God as friends, like those bloody and deceitful men in *Psal.* 55. and lye in the bosom of the Church till they sting her to death. Of these mens company therefore principally beware.

*Secondly*, If by any unavoidable necessity you happen to fall into these wicked persons company, be careful that you quit your

ſelves well in it. God cautioned his Church of old, *that they ſhould not walk in the ways of the wicked*; and in particular, that they *ſhould not ſay a confederacy to all them to whom they ſhall ſay a confederacy*, Iſa. 8. 12. Have a care therefore of your ſelves, and do not chime in with their guilt, either in accuſing the innocent, or acquitting the wicked; for they will tell you that there is no Popiſh Plot, but that there is a *Presbyterian* one. Have a care now, do not let their wicked company make you give the lye to your conſcience. But as far as true prudence, and the circumſtances are on you will permit, be bold and valiant for the truth, and give not up the tender loving kindneſs of God in ſo miraculous and glorious a diſcovery of their Plots, to gratifie the luſts of a few treacherous and ſottiſh bruits; what did Divine mercy give you this ſalvation and deliverance, with ſuch an out-ſtretched arm, that the Hiſtories and Annals of no Country nor Age can ever parallel, to the intent that you ſhould throw it away again to pleaſe that very ſpirit and party that you are delivered from? were you ſaved not by bow, nor by ſword, nor by battel, nor by horſe, nor by horſemen, but by the Spirit of the Lord working on the minds and conſciences of the very Inſtruments themſelves; and giving them no reſt nor peace till they had made their diſcoveries; and will you let wicked men perſwade you to throw this ſtupendious mercy back into the very face of God Almighty again? Have a care! for how juſtly may our deſtruction come as a whirlwind, if ungrateful to Heaven and our own ſelves, we ſhall be guilty of this ſin? But I muſt make haſte to Exhortation, or the time will prevent me.

3. Well, is it ſo that wicked perſons are Plotters, and the only Plotters? then be exhorted to come out of that eſtate that expoſes you to ſo much hazard. Conceive you heard the Lord Jeſus ſpeaking you almoſt dead with that dreadful doom, *Go ye curſed*, Mat. 25. 41. For the wicked here, and the curſed there, are ſynonimous, according to that in *Prov.* 3. 33. *The curſe of the Lord is in the houſe of the wicked.* For the wicked here will be the curſed there; and the curſed there, are the wicked here. Nay, if there were a ſentence beyond, *Depart ye curſed*, it were due to theſe wicked Plotters here in the Text. For if you read the latter end of the 25*th.* of St. *Matth.* where the eternal and indelible doom of the curſed is written, you will find nothing but negatives charged on them, *I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink,*

*drink, I was a stranger and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.* These are the crimes of those cursed ones. But the wicked, whom we are discoursing of, not only did not minister to them in their distresses, but plotted, contrived, and laid out all their power, parts, and cunning, to bring them into those distresses. And if they be damn'd that did not visit the members of Christ when they were cast into prison, what damnation are these worthy of that casts them into prison? And if they that would not give them harbour, nor bread to eat, nor water to drink, nor raiment to put on, when they were strangers, and a hungry, thirsty and naked, are in such a damnable estate, in what a damned condition must these wicked be in here in the Text, that by their cursed plots and hellish conspiracies, took their harbour from them, and that took away their bread from their bellies, and their clothes from their backs? With what face can these behold the incensed brow of the Lord Jesus, the great Judg of quick and dead, when he shall come to plead the cause, and vindicate the sufferings of those just persons that they have plotted against? As ever therefore you would escape their damned doom, be exhorted to come out of that estate that does expose you to it.

And that this Exhortation may be the more effectual, I shall farther enforce it with a few Considerations.

*First*, Consider, that till you do obey this Exhortation, and depart from the estate and condition of the wicked, you are in open rebellion, and engaged in publick acts of hostility against God: And what do you think it is nothing, or but a light thing to be an enemy and rebel against God? We of the Clergy keep a huge deal of ado against rebels and enemies to the King and Government, and we do well if we level our discourses right, and point our weapons against such that are so indeed. But we must be sure that in those warm discourses, we do not like those in *Psal.* 11. 2. *bend our bows, and make ready our arrows upon the string, that we may privily shoot at the upright in heart.* For else instead of wounding our enemies, we do but destroy our friends. For do not think because a conscientious man dissents from us in a few Ceremonious observations, and the external modes and fashions of our publick Worship, that therefore he is presently to be dagger'd to death as a rebel and enemy

enemy to the King and Government; a practice to which too many of us of the Clergy have too great a propensity. For if we make Nonconformity to publick injoined Worship the *Shibboleth* or Characteristical note of Rebellion, farewell to all our Martyrs; we must begin a new computation, and reckon with the *Romanists* all those glorified souls for arrant Rebels; and so we must the blessed Apostles themselves also, and doom at one breath all the generation of the just, which would be a plot to purpose; but how becoming Protestants, I leave to their more cool and sedate consideration that are most apt to be immoderately hot and furious in this matter. Only this I'le add, that if our Lord may be believed, they are more to blame that impose those offensive things upon the Church of Christ, than those that cannot conform to them. For he hath planted his woe against him by whom the offence cometh, not against him that taketh the offence when it comes, *Mat.* 18 7. Those therefore that lay out more zeal than knowledg about those wens of Worship, that rather deform and mishape our Christian unity than beautifie or adorn it, would do better, and give a better account of the faithful discharge of their Ministry to Jesus Christ whose Embassadors they pretend to be, if they would imploy their Talents about this Exhortation, in calling out men and women from the number and estate of the wicked that plotteth against the just, and shew them plainly from the word of truth, that while they continue in that condition, they are but enemies and rebels to the God of Heaven, and stand engaged in open acts of hostility against him, and must fall under that condemnation, *Mat.* 19. 27. *But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.* And shew them from the holy Scriptures that while they continue such, both they and all that ever they do are an abomination to the Lord. If any thing that they do were acceptable, one would think it should be their prayers, and Religious services; but even these are an abomination also, *Prov.* 28. 9. and in *Prov* 15. 8. the wise man tells us, *That the sacrifices of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayers of the upright is his delight.* It is a very gross mistake therefore to think that our coming to Church, and our mumbling or saying over a few prayers here with the Congregation, is the total of all Religion; and to imagine that we are in a good estate because of this. For alas, this may be, and I fear but too much is *Vox & praterea nihil*; and if you remain wicked, this doth but add to your abominations. For this is but like

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the Scribes, Pharisees and Hypocrites, *paying tythe of mint, cumin and anis, whiles they omitted the greater and more weighty matters of the Law, mercy, judgment and faith,* Mat. 23. 23. Wherefore let others sow what pillows they please under your elbows, to make your wickedness easie to you; and let them cry, peace, peace to you as long as they will, I must preach to you the word of Truth, which says expresly, *That there is no peace (saith the Lord) unto the wicked,* Isa. 58. 22. And now whether you will believe the Lord and his word, or believe them that sooth and flatter you up in your wickedness, at your own peril be it. For I am resolved by the help of God to discharge both the parts of my Ministry with faithfulness, that as I am commanded to *say to the righteous it shall be well with him,* so I will also say as I am commanded, *Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him,* Isa. 3. 10, 11. This is the first Consideration; come we now to the second.

*Secondly,* Consider, that till you come out of your wicked estate, as you are Gods enemy, so God is your enemy; and how dreadful is the condition of those that have God for their enemy? what to have that God for your enemy in whom you live, move, and have your being? that God that gives you your daily bread, and is the very breath of your nostrils, to have him for your enemy? 'Twas a mighty concern that *Job* that righteous and upright man was in from his apprehension that God held him for his enemy, *Job* 13. 24. but how much more his concern would have been, if he had apprehended God to have been his enemy, you may see in that of *Saul*; for when *Saul* had so sin'd against God that he would answer him no more, neither by Prophets, nor by dreams, he applied himself to the Witch of *Endor*, and makes his complaint thereof to the spirit that she had raised. But see what a cooling answer he receiv'd from the *Spectrum* in 1 *Sam.* 28. 16. *Wherefore then dost thou asked me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and become thine enemy?* And 'tis said in *ver.* 20. *That when Saul heard this, he straightway fell all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, so that there was no strength in him.* And no marvel, for it's enough to strike you stark dead, unless you are senseless seared sinners, to hear that God is become your enemy; when he that should be your best and greatest friend, he that alone can rescue and deliver you out of your enemies hands, for him to become your enemy himself? Lord, what killing news must this be to any soul that will but seriously con-

conſider it? You read in the 5*th* of *Daniel*, that King *Belſhazzar* made a great debauch for no leſs than a thouſand of his Lords; and as they were buſie in taking up of their cups, *and praiſing the gods of gold, and of ſilver, of braſs, of wood, and of ſtone, at the ſame inſtant came forth fingers of a mans hand, and wrote over againſt the candleſticks upon the plaiſter of the wall of the Kings palace; and the King ſaw the part of the hand that wrote; then the Kings countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, ſo that the joints of his loins were looſed, and his knees ſmote one againſt another*, v.4,5,6. O! ſo will yours do, you will be in a dreadful twitter, when God declares himſelf your enemy, as here he did to him. Your heart will fail, and the very powers of nature will diſſolve within you. And therefore among all the Lamentations of *Jeremiah*, though they are every one exceeding ſad, yet methinks there's none ſo diſmal as that in *Lam.* 2. 5. where the Prophet complains, *The Lord was as an enemy*; and yet this was but *as an* enemy neither, but even that was ſufficient, the Prophet tells you, to increaſe the mourning and lamentation in the Daughter of *Judah:* As well it might, for it totally alters all the methods of Gods Providence towards a people, and puts as it were another nature into the Almighty. For he that is love it ſelf, is turned all into anger. *God is angry* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *with the wicked every day*, Pſal. 7. 11.

The greateſt conſternation, and among the greateſt perſons that ever was heard of in any Hiſtory in the world, I believe, by perſons, eſpecially of their quality, is that which you read in *Rev.* 6. 15, 16. for the Text tells you, *That the Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, hid themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains:* What! the King of the earth, and the rich men, nay the chief Captains, and the mighty men take to their heels and run away, and hide themſelves at this fearful rate! and not only to do thus, but to invocate the very mountains and rocks in which they hid, to fall on them, and hide them yet more ſecurely? why! what's the matter? what's the cauſe of this mighty prodigious conſternation? Why nothing elſe, but that the Lord was their enemy, and the great day of his wrath and anger was come, and they were not able to ſtand it. And do you think to be able to ſtand when ſuch mighty men as theſe muſt fly to corners? Do not therefore alter the methods of his Providence, nor change the procedure of the Almighty towards you. For though he profeſſes that fury is not in

him, *Isa.* 27. 4. yet he also tells you that he will *make his fury smoke against the wicked. Now consider this all you that forget God, lest he tare you away, and there be none to deliver*, Psal. 50. 22.

*Thirdly*, Consider, that till you come out of your wicked estate, you are under the curse of God, and all the prayers of the Church are against you. You come hither and think to have a share in the Churches absolution; but you are mistaken, it belongs not to you; read the Absolution, and you will see that we are to declare and pronounce to the Lord, people being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins; but what's that to you? we are to declare, *That God pardoneth and absolveth all them which truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his Gospel.* But what's this to you, whiles you remain wicked, will not repent, unfeignedly believe, nor perform the conditions of Absolution? In *Numb.* 22, and 23. *chap.* you may see a wicked King bribing a wicked Prophet to curse the people of God; the History is of *Balack* and *Balaam*; but as *Balaam* said to *Balack*, *How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?* Chap. 23. 8. so must I say to you, how can we bless whom God hath not blessed? What do you think that Commination, *Prov.* 24. 24. of which we have spoken already, is to go for nothing? Would you have us to undergo the curse of God, and the curse of men, to bless those that are accursed of God? I'le not flatter ye; they are cursed Ministers that undertake so cursed a work. What, would you have us to debauch the blessings and curses of God? and betray and pervert the uses of our highest trust? For we are to pronounce none blessed, no, nor cursed neither on earth, but such as we have a sure ground to believe from the word of God, will receive the same sentence from our great Master the God of Heaven, whose Ministers we are in this dreadful administration; and what shall we bless the wicked which the whole Book of God tells us the Lord abhors? Or curse the righteous, in whom the Scriptures assure us is all his delight? How shall we answer and justifie these Censures at the Bar of Christs Tribunal? And would to God the Guides and Governours of our Church would lay this thing more seriously to heart than I doubt they do. And consider Christ gave them not the power of the Keys, to accommodate their lusts of pride, envy, covetousness; nor that they should cast or shut good men out of the Church, and let or keep the wicked in, as I also doubt is sometimes done. For this is utterly to subvert and over-turn the whole

design

design of the Gospel. For the design of the Gospel in all the Institutions thereof is, that Christs Church might be a pure Spouse unto him, not a beastly and impudent Harlot. Pray you read *Revel.* 22. 15. and you will see what manner of persons they are that Christ shuts out or excommunicates: *Without* (says that great Text) *are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murtherers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lye.* And if we should shut out all these from our Church, I mean all those that are publickly and notoriously such (as certainly it is our duty to do) I fear we should have but pitiful thin Congregations. How therefore we shall answer to Christ, the letting in these dogs into his fold of the Church, and our so industriously keeping his sheep out, is, if I mistake not, our highest concernment to consider.

But I proceed: As those you see that are in a wicked estate, are our enemies to God, and as such are under the curse of God; so the Prayers of the Church are against them. *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered,* was the ancient standing Prayer of the Church of God. But how dismal is that Petition of the Royal Prophet, *Psal.* 59. 5. where he prays the *Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, that he would not be merciful to any wicked transgressors?* So that you see the Church which by their prayers helps to open the door of mercy to sinners, shuts it upon the wicked by their prayers, and prays against them in *terminis* (for what *David* prays for here, is the prayers of the Church) *Be not merciful, O God, to any wicked transgressors.* Nay, you find *Deborah* and *Barack* not content to pray that God would not be merciful to such; but expresly pray for their perishing. For in their Song of Thanksgiving in the 5*th.* of *Judges*, upon the occasion of *Jaels* slaying *Sisera*, they conclude it thus, *So let all thine enemies perish, O God.* And if you remain some of them, all this prayer must needs reach you. And the holy *Psalmist* makes the like prayer in *Psal.* 68. 2. for there he prays thus, *As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.* What then, are you mad to perish? and will you abide in that estate that must end in perishing, and where the prayers of the Church of God binds you over to perishing? Be exhorted therefore from this consideration to come out of that perishing and destructive estate wherein you are, that the prayers of the Church of God may be engaged for, and not against you. For this prayer of theirs will be heard, *Psal.* 110. 1. *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* And

this saying of the Lord is quoted no less than six times in the New Testament; so that you may lay your souls upon the certainty of it; and what, would you be made the footstool of Christ? to be trampled upon and trodden down to the lowest Hell? for, be as proud, and be as opinion'd of your selves as you will, here's your portion if you remain Gods enemies. What, did you not hear but just now in what a tremble the Kings of the earth, the great, the rich, the mighty men were in that were enemies to God? and are you mad to be in that fearful distraction too? Did you not hear how they run from Mountain to Rock to hide themselves? Pride your selves therefore as you will, and trample on your Brethren as long as you will, your Plumes must come down with a vengeance; for 'tis said by him that will never alter the word that is gone out of his mouth, you must be made an everlasting footstool, and must be trodden under foot eternally, if you live and die in that condition. Wherefore, as you love your selves, and as you love your souls, come out of that condition that exposeth you to so much hazard, and wherein you must perish, it may be, here, but to be sure for ever hereafter.

And thus much for the *Considerations:* come we now to a second Branch of the *Exhortation.*

*Secondly*, Is it so that wicked persons are Plotters, and the only Plotters that the world has in it? then be exhorted to judg rightly of things; do not follow a giddy, heady humour that would make you pass a precipitate judgment; but weigh things well in your mind, and be not rash and hasty to pass your sentence before you have considered it. It may be you may be under the mistake that *Ahab* King of *Israel* was; for in 1 *King.* 18. you read of one of the greatest mistakes, and between two of the greatest men that you find in all the Scriptures, for it was between the Prophet *Elijah* and King *Ahab*, and about this very point that we are upon. For in the 17th verse it is said, *That when Ahab saw Elijah, that he said unto him, Art thou the troubler of Israel?* A pretty tough complement at the very first meeting! and I do verily believe that it was *Ahabs* judgment, and that his lewd ungodly Courtiers, and the worser part of his Clergy had persuaded him fully into an opinion, that this great and holy Prophet was he, and only he, that troubled *Israel.* But let us see what *Elijah* answers to this charge; and

and that you have in the very next verſe thus, *And he anſwered, I have not troubled Iſrael, but thou and thy fathers houſe, in that ye have forſaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou haſt followed Baalam.* A very home and ſmart anſwer. Wherefore here muſt needs be a great miſtake ſomewhere; for the King charges the Prophet, and the Prophet the King; the King makes the Prophet to be the troubler of *Iſrael*, but the Prophet denies the charge, and makes the King to be ſo; and ſo he was indeed; for *Elijah*, proves him ſo. From which we may learn, that it is not impoſſible but that even in our days the troublers of *Iſrael* may be filed to a wrong account. But you will ſay, Was not *Elijah* the troubler of *Iſrael*, when St. *James* tells you, *That he earneſtly prayed that it might not rain, and it rained not in Iſrael for the ſpace of three years and ſix months?* Jam. 5. 17. I anſwer, no, you calculate amiſs; as all men do, that go not to the beginning of accounts; for they were the troublers of *Iſrael* that counſelled thoſe guilts and ſins that brought theſe judgments upon their heads, not the holy Prophet that prayed; this is a falſe and deceitful computation; like theirs that cry out on *Forty one*, and the miſeries that *Forty one* brought upon the Nation; but not a word of the wickedneſs of the preceding years that brought thoſe miſeries of *Forty-one* upon us, not a word of thoſe Perſecutions for Conſcience ſake, that made ſo many thouſands of good Proteſtants chuſe rather to leave their native Country, to leave their Friends, their Relations, their Livelihoods, Trades and Occupations, and go with their Wives and little ones, to dwell in the vaſt and howling Wilderneſſes of *America*, than to live here any longer; and that the poor Pagans were more kind and tender to them than we their fellow Proteſtants. Not a word of thoſe barbarous and inhumane ſtigmatizings, brandings, gaggings, Pillorings, ſhameleſs whippings, and cutting off ears, inflicted with other oppreſſive judgments and proceedings by the High Commiſſion and Star-Chamber Courts, Judicatories fitter for *Spain* than for *England*, *Turks* than Chriſtians; by which the Liberties, Fortunes and Properties of the People of *England* were invaded at pleaſure.

I am loth to proceed on this unpleaſing Subject, or elſe I could ſpeak of the diſcontinuance of Parliaments; not a word of the Maſſacre in *Ireland*, which was plotted before, but perpetrated in *Forty one*; where not Two or three hundred, nor Two or three thouſand only, but Three hundred thouſand, Men, Women,

men, and Children were murthered in cold blood, or otherwise destroyed and ruined in less than two years time, as saith Sir *John Temple* in his History of that Massacre. Not a word of all these and a thousand mischiefs besides, that brought the Calamities of 41; but 41, 41, is croaked out every where; Ay, would to God I could not say in too many Pulpits too; as if it were the first year that ever our *English* world had in it; when to speak plainly, it was the intolerable wickedness of some Courtiers, joined with the pride, insolence, and covetousness of too many of the Clergy for many years together, (from whence occasion was taken by some aspiring and covetous men on the contrary side for their private interests) that brought that deluge of Judgment on us. For when they saw the iniquity of their heels begun to compass them about, and threaten their heads, they fomented a War in *Scotland* first, and afterwards in *England*, to save themselves and their fellow Conspirators from the strokes of Justice. It were well if these things were buried in oblivion, and not daily called to remembrance by crying out, 41, 41, upon all occasions; and that the present Court and Clergy may not tread in their steps, and bring both King and Kingdom into the same or like miseries again, is, I am perswaded, as seasonable, as it is an honest and orthodox prayer.

And now what I have said on this occasion, I call God to witness, I have not spoken out of prejudice, but what I do verily believe in my soul are the words of soberness and truth, and the modestest account that the matter will bear. Be not then apt to build on mistakes, which are but false foundations, though they have never so great authorities to back them, but receive this word of Exhortation to judg rightly of things; which if you do, it will enable you to discharge two duties, which are necessary and important at all seasons, but in a more and especial manner seasonable at this juncture.

*First*, It will enable us to have more tender thoughts for dissenting Protestants.

*Secondly*, It will enable us to see more clearly through all the Arts of our Professed Enemies.

*First*, It will enable us to have more tender thoughts of dissenting Protestants; because when we come to judg rightly of things, we

we ſhall come to ſee the *Humanum eſt errare*, and that we our ſelves are ſubject to miſtakes; that we ſhould bear with, and forgive that in others which we would have born and forgiven in our ſelves; we ſhall ſee that the government and dominion of the Conſcience belongs only to the Lord, and not to us, and that in that reſpect they are anothers ſervant, and not ours, and that to their own Maſter they muſt ſtand or fall. We ſhall then ſee that if we exerciſe any other courſe on the Conſcience than prayer, perſuaſion, ſound reaſon and Evangelical means and arguments, we leave the Goſpels amicable artillery, and go to the Devils Armory for force, and the Church of Chriſt ſtands in need of Satans ſtrength to ſupport it. We ſhall then clearly ſee, that we do but juſtifie the *Papiſts* practiſe upon us, by our practiſe on our fellow-Proteſtants. For by the ſame rule, and on the ſame reaſon that we force theſe to conform to us, may they force us to conform to them. For if we will be judg of our diſſenting Friends Conſciences in their little ſeparations from us, why ſhould not the *Papiſts* be judg of our Conſciences in our greater ſeparation from them? Wherefore our judging rightly of things, will teach us this tenderneſs, and that condeſcending temper and comportment that was in *Abraham* to *Lot*, *Gen.* 13. 8. *Let there be no ſtrife, I pray thee*, ſays *Abraham*, *between thee and me, for we are brethren.* We ſhould then ſee that the *Papiſts* rage is equal, if not exceeding, to them as to our ſelves; and therefore the right judging of things will help us to argue thus. What, does it become us to weaken our ſelves, and cut off our own ſtrength? We, the whileſt we have our diſſenting Friends with us, have work enough to ſtemm the tide, and keep out Popery: does it become us to deprive our ſelves of the one half at leaſt of our Friends, by falling foul with our diſſenting Brethren? God forbid. In the 9*th* of St. *Mark* and the 38*th* verſe, you will find St. *John* giving an account to Chriſt of a ſomewhat ſingular and peculiar paſſage, and our Lords reply concerning it, very worthy of our obſervation. *Maſter*, ſays St. *John*, *we ſaw one caſting out Devils in thy name, and he followed not us.* Now ſee the Lords anſwer in the two following verſes: *But Jeſus ſays, forbid him not; for there is no man which ſhall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me, for he that is not againſt us, is on our part.* Learn now from this anſwer of our Lord your own duty; what, do you ſee men buſie in caſting out Devils, and caſting out Devils too in Chriſts name, engaged in the ſelf-ſame work

that

that you are engaged in, and will you forbid them? God forbid. And remember this command of Christ, *forbid them not*: Ay, but they do not follow us: What of that? they are on our part, they are of our side still for all that, therefore forbid them not. As if our Lord had said, What, will you lessen your own party? will you fall upon your own side, because they do not follow you in every thing, when they are doing the great work of the Gospel, that you your selves are doing, your dispossessing men, and casting out of Devils? God forbid!

Well then, shall we suffer the *Papists* to perswade us against this command of Christ, to destroy our own party, our fellow Protestants, because in every punctilio they follow not us, that thereby we may weaken our own side, and strengthen theirs? God forbid. A right judgment of things will enable us to reason thus: Why would the *Papists* have us persecute the *Presbyterians*, but because they are Protestants? Why would they sharpen and keen our rage against Dissenters, but because they are Protestants? Would they ever desire their destruction with that eagerness that they do, but because they are Protestants? Well then, if the *Papists* desire their destruction as Protestants, ought not we desire and endeavour their preservation as Protestants? If the *Papists* would ruin them as a part of the Protestant interest; nay, and if I may speak it without offence, as the tightest and briskest part of the Protestant interest, ought we not as such to endeavour the preservation, and to give them all the demonstration that can be that we have laid aside those little foolish prejudices that the crafts of our enemy, and our own heats and inadvertency had put upon us? and that we are now returned to some sobriety, and do clearly see that there is no one argument that either the *Papists* or our selves can bring for our persecuting our fellow-Protestants, but is a cogent argument for us to love them, and as much as in us lyes to endeavour their welfare and preservation? Thus you see that our judging rightly of things, works in our minds more tender thoughts for our dissenting Protestants.

*Secondly*, As our judging rightly of things does enable us to have more tender thoughts for Dissenters, so it enables us also to see more clearly through all the arts of our professed enemies. We shall then see every step they make more distinctly, than when our judgment is mudded and blinded, we are able to do. Hence is it that you find

find the Apoſtle *Paul*, praying ſo earneſtly for the *Epheſians*, that *the eyes of their underſtanding might be enlightned*, Ephes. 1. 18. for he knew that they had a wily Devil to deal with, and that he and his wicked inſtruments would find out ſuch a world of tricks, and arts and ſhifts, that unleſs the eye of their underſtanding were enlightned that they might judg rightly of things, and ſee through all their deceitful veils and pretences, it was impoſſible but they ſhould be deceived; but this detects their deceit, and diſcovers all their juglings, ſo that you are not taken in their ſnares. How many little tricks and arts have the Popiſh party played upon us within this year and half laſt paſt? Into how many various forms and ſhapes have they caſt their deſigns, on purpoſe to deceive you? Firſt a Popiſh plot, then a Presbyterian plot, and now the Prentices plot; and yet all three Plots theirs, and all tending to one and the ſelf-ſame end, the deſtruction of the Proteſtant Religion. For like lines in a Circumference, though by their art they ſeem to make them come from never ſuch oppoſite parts, yet they all meet in the Center. Their firſt Plots primarily aimed at cutting off the King, which the wiſdom of God and the courage of the Parliament hath yet preſerved; and becauſe the Gentlemen of the Nation, and true lovers and honourers of their King, their Country, and the Proteſtant Religion, put out themſelves in Parliament, in the Country, and every where, at ſo bold and daring a rate, they ſuſpended the perpetrating of their Villany on the Perſon of his Majeſty, and new ſhaped and painted their ſecond Plot principally againſt them; knowing that if they were but out of the way that always interpoſed and flung themſelves between danger and his Majeſty, they ſhould ſoon recover the point again, and compaſs their firſt deſign of killing the King, as they would themſelves; and therefore under the notion of Presbyters and Presbyters plotting againſt the Royal life, which above all things they ſtudied to preſerve, they would have deſtroyed thoſe Gentlemen; though if you look their *Meal-tub* Liſt, you will not find one of forty of them Presbyterians. But ſuch is their Villany, and ſuch the Debauchery of the age for that Villany to work upon, that they and their Partizans reckon every one a Presbyterian and Fanatick that hath not one cloven foot at leaſt. Now the Methods of this Plot were all to be managed by ſubornations, that thoſe Worthies might have fallen as tranſgreſſors by the weight of the Law, as by the arts of wicked *Jezabel*, righteous *Naboth* did; and when their

curſed hand had been in, every man ſhould have been made a Presbyterian that had ought to loſe. For to be rich, to be wiſe, to be faithful, qualifications that in our Anceſtors days were wont to create eſteem, are with this wicked crew become the higheſt crimes. Men of honour, conſcience, and true worth, that will rather periſh than betray their God, their King, and their Country, are in this Plot the very Butt of all their fury. In 2 *Sam.* 3. 33. you find King *David* lamenting over dead *Abner* thus, *Died Abner as a fool dieth?* But had this Prodigious wickedneſs took, we muſt have lamented all the excellent men of the Kingdom at another rate, and not only ſaid, Died theſe as fools die, but died theſe as Knaves, as Rogues, as Villains die? We muſt have lamented thus, Died all theſe as tranſgreſſors, as Rebels, as Traytors die? what, by the hand of Juſtice? and by the ſtroke of the Law? It was one aggravation of our Saviours ſufferings, *That he made his grave with the wicked; and that he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors*; as every ſoul muſt needs be that falls by the hands of falſe Witneſſes. For the Judg will tell you, that he muſt pronounce ſentence according to the Verdict; and the Jury will tell you, that they muſt give their Verdict according to the Evidence: So that if God had not moſt miraculouſly prevented, many worthy Souls in the whole Nation had been cut off by a few ſuborned Villains. Nor was this Plot calculated only againſt their Lives, but againſt their Fortunes, againſt their Honours, and againſt their Poſterity. For they would have affected the child unborn with it. A Villany of ſuch a reaching magnitude, as if it were layed in the very depths of Hell, as undoubtedly it was. The Wife could not here have lamented the loſs of her Husband alone, nor the Children the loſs of their Father alone, as in other deaths they uſe to do, but muſt have lamented their own loſſes alſo. That's in my opinion a very ſore threatning that the Lord ſpeaks concerning *Jehojakim* the ſon of *Joſiah* King of *Judah*, in *Jer.* 22. 18. *They ſhall not lament for him, ſaying, Ah my Brother, or Ah my Siſter; they ſhall not lament for him, ſaying, Ah Lord, or Ah his glory.* For ſo mourners uſed to compaſſionate one another. So in like manner here one child could not condole with another for the loſs of their worthy Father; but all condole their own loſſes; the Brother that might have ſaid to the Siſter, and the Siſter to the Brother, Ah Brother, and Ah Siſter, what a dear and matchleſs Father have we loſt! how gracious was he in his Speech! how courteous in his carriage! how ſound

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in his Counsels! how prudent in his Reproofs! and so have run over all the charms of his whole conversation; and that would have gone on in their Lamentations, Ah what a glory was he to our Family! what a glory to his Friends! what a glory to his Country! must now have cried out, O Brother, and O Sister, how hath our Father undone us! how hath he destroyed our Fortunes! ruined our Family, and laid our very blood under a Legal attaint? And certainly in this regaad as well as others, are these kind of men stiled in Scripture *the sons of Belial*; and therefore you find among the instructions, that *Jezabel* gave in her Letters to the Elders of the City, for the cutting off of *Naboth*, that this was one, *That they should set two men, sons of Belial before him, to bear witness against him, saying, thou didst blaspheme God and the King*. But for ever blessed be God that they digged this pit as low as Hell, yet his gracious hand followed and found them out, and hath enabled us to sing that they are fallen into it themselves; and to him alone be the glory thereof. For this Plot was detected by the immediate hand of Heaven, and not by man. For it lay too deep for humane wisdom to fathom it, it was only the Almighty that could, and did find it out. And therefore this second Plot failing, on comes their third, and if *England* be wise their last Plot that ever they shall make upon us; and this, if we may judg of *Hercules* by his foot, and the whole by the part already detected, was, That since they could not cut off the King by their privy Conspiracies, nor the Worthies of the Kingdom by their false Witnesses, they would now go directly to work, and cut off both and all, by a bloody Massacre; though we hope the same loving-kindness that blasted both their former attempts will also this; but beware the third time, is a rule that we Learned in the beginning of our days, and pray God the arts of our enemies may not make us forget it now. And to draw in the more company to abet this bloody work, the burning *Oliver* and the Rump were to umbrage and initiate it on the Stage. For a few loose Prentices, and a number of unaccountable persons, were to begin the tumult under that pretence, and when the rout was up, the actors themselves were to have appeared and played their part. And though great discoveries have been made thereof, yet many wise men doubt that we are not yet beyond the danger of it. Wherefore if now after all this, Justice be not done on this wicked bloody generation, both King and People have reason to fear that they are under that dismal sentence denounced by the

Lord on *Ahab* for sparing *Benhadad*, 1 King. 20. 41. *Thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.* I am as little for persecuting the *Papists* upon the account of Conscience as another. But yet I must say, that a man that makes it his conscience to plot my destruction, and the destruction of all that's dear and precious to me, and is so restless at it, that as soon as one Villany is discover'd, he forms another; and by repeating his Plots again and again upon me, gives me such infallible assurance that he will never be quiet till he hath cut my throat. I confess I think I should be a great debtor to my own safety, should I not desire he might be sent to live a little further off; and this is no more than what the common justice due to humane society does require, and our very Laws themselves do warrant. For if one private person may demand as his right, the security of binding to the Peace any one that he avers on his corporal Oath he goes in danger of his life from, certainly that Justice is not to be denied to a whole Nation. And since no tye of Law is sufficient to bind them to the Peace here, sure it is but justice to send them elsewhere, that the Nation may be secured; and that they may have the less cause to complain of ill usage, let them in Gods name carry their estates with them.

And as our judging rightly of things will enable us to see more clearly through the arts of our enemies in general; so will it enable you to see quite thorough their grand cheat in particular. For that which they most labour to frighten us with, is, that unless we have their sentiments and talk, and think of things as wickedly and impudently as they do, that we are friends to the Fanaticks, and enemies to his Majesty; the first is said only to divide us from each other; the last to prejudice the Government against us both. As to the first, I'le only say that I do not think that it is so crying a sin as the clamor of their kind of cattle would insinuate, to be friendly to Fanaticks, and therefore I am not at all ashamed to confess for one, that as I look upon them as the best dissenting Protestants, that are most friendly to the Church of *England*; so I look upon them as the best Church of *England* men that are the most friendly to dissenting Protestants; and if all others would account so too, I should think our selves in a truer union, than any act of Conformity can make, and that's all I shall say to that charge, and all that I think is worth the saying to it. But as to the last, I do confess that I do judg that a very great sin, and therefore shall be a little longer and more particular in the examining of this charge.

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For I do hope that every one that makes a conſcience of fearing God, does make a conſcience alſo of honouring the King. But I doubt there is ſome miſtake betwixt us concerning this duty, and that this wicked generation call that an honouring the King, which indeed is not. For I do verily believe that thoſe Preſidents of the Kingdom, thoſe Governours, Princes, Counſellors, and Captains, that conſulted together to make that Royal Statute and wicked Decree, *That whoſoever ſhould ask any petition of any god or man for thirty days, ſave of the King, ſhould be caſt into the den of Lions, Dan.* 6. 7. and that went to the King to ratifie and eſtabliſh that Decree, *v.* 8. did carry themſelves very toppingly for the Kings friends, and the only principal Royaliſts and loyal perſons that honoured the King in that Region; and ſo I believe did thoſe in the 3*d* of *Dan.* that accuſed thoſe honeſt and worthy Nonconformiſts that would not fall down and perform that worſhip that the King had commanded, *ver.* 12. And I do believe as they accounted themſelves the only honourers of the King, ſo they reckoned *Daniel* and the three Children for factious and diſloyal Fanaticks. But now I do alſo believe, that if you will but look how God Almighty, who is the true and righteous Judg, accounted them, you will ſee that thoſe wicked Court-Paraſites were under a great miſtake, and that *Daniel* and the three Children that refuſed to obey thoſe unrighteous Laws and Decrees, were truer friends to, and honourers of the King, than thoſe that had made and preſſed the execution of them. If you will therefore but entertain this Exhortation to judg rightly of things, you will ſee through all theſe thin and pitiful veils that theſe wicked Plotters ſpread both over their own Villany, and over your integrity, and will ſee that this is but one of their old arts, and a cheat ſo oft repeated, that nothing leſs than impudence would beſtow the pains to lick it over afreſh, and impoſe it on the world again. For did not this ſame ſpirit ever do thus? Did they not make innocent *Naboth* an enemy to the King, nay, and took away his precious blood upon that account, becauſe he would not part with his Vineyard, which was his Inheritance? Did they not account the Prophet *Jeremiah* an enemy to the King, becauſe he preſſed him to obey the word of the Lord in yielding to the *Caldeans*? Did they not account thoſe we laſt mentioned, *Daniel*, and the three Children, enemies to the King, becauſe they would not obey thoſe wicked and unrighteous Laws that the King had commanded? Did not *Haman* accuſe *Mordecai*, one of the beſt friends the King had,

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and all the *Jews* for the Kings enemies, and ſuch as did not keep the Kings Laws? and upon that accuſation obtained that bloody Decree, which was written, and the Letters ſent by Poſts into all the Kings Provinces to deſtroy, to kill, and cauſe to periſh all *Jews*, both young and old, little children and women in one day, *Eſth.* 3.13. And all this barbarous Maſſacre that was to ſpare no age nor ſex, for no other reaſon but becauſe *Mordecai* would not bow the knee to *Haman*. Did they not accuſe the very Apoſtles themſelves with this crime? Pray ſee the 17*th* of the *Acts*, in that tumult and uproar that this wicked generation made at *Theſſalonica*, when they haled *Jaſon* and divers others before the Rulers of the City? For did they not among the reſt of their venom cry out thus? *Theſe all do contrary to the decree of Caſar*, verſ. 7*th*. Nay, our bleſſed Lord himſelf, that moſt innocent and immaculate Lamb of God, even he could not eſcape this their falſe and curſed imputation. For you find theſe wicked Plotters accuſing him before *Pilate* thus, *Luk.* 23.2. *We found this fellow perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caſar*. And when *Pilate* had examined the matter and found nothing in their accuſation true, and on hearing all they could ſay, could find no fault in him; and therefore ſought again, and again, and again to releaſe him; did not theſe damned Plotters for fear that holy Jeſus ſhould eſcape their bloody and wicked hands, frighten *Pilate* to the condemnation of him? by ſaying to him, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Caſars friend*, Joh. 19. 12. and that did their work; and crucified Chriſt effectually. But thoſe that judg rightly of things, they are never frightned with ſuch ſcarecrows, but know how to ſhew themſelves friends to the King, and yet friends to their Conſcience too. They will not purchaſe the reputation of loyal by any Villainous acts; for they have learned to be loyal on a more noble and better account; they know that diſobedience to wicked Laws and commands, is a greater honour to the King, and merits more his favour, than thoſe wicked Plotters that made and procured thoſe wicked Laws and commands from him. You ſee therefore the excellent ſervice that this branch of the Exhortation will do ye, to judg rightly of things.

I am not ignorant that the *Papiſts* and all thoſe wicked Plotters cry up their Loyalty at a mighty rate; and truly if they themſelves did not do it, I know not who would? I know alſo they ſpeak great things, and huge ſwelling words of their utter abhorrence of *Oliver* and the Rump. But how comes it about that theſe

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ſo hugely loyal *Papiſts* never plotted thus againſt *Oliver* and the Rump? How comes it about that they did not burn *London* down about their ears as well as about ours? Why did they not as barbarouſly butcher their Miniſters of Juſtice, as they have done ours? Why, I will not aſſign any cauſe, or load them with any thing that is not true, for they have guilt enough of their own, without our feigning any for them, and therefore I do verily believe that they were as real enemies to *Oliver* and the Rump, and their Miniſters, as they are to his Majeſty and his; and that the only reaſon why they did not play thoſe pranks then, that they do now, was becauſe they dared not do it. For they knew that they would have handled them without mittens, and have truſſed them up to rights, if they ſhould have gone about to trick them as they do us. For this right I will do them, that though they love wickedneſs as their lives, nor hardly are ever in their own Element but when they are acting it; yet when they ſee it muſt, and certainly will return upon their own pates, they have an excellent gift of continence, and can tell as well how to ſpeak and fawn upon a Government they hate, as well as ſtab it. Wherefore why they did not practice upon *Oliver* and the Rump then, as they do upon his Majeſty and his people now, was only becauſe they dared not do it. For do not let us miſtake the mettle and courage of theſe men, for they do *Patrizare* and are of the ſame temper with their father; and the Apoſtle St. *James* gives you the true meaſure of his courage, *Jam.* 4. 7. *Reſiſt the Devil and he will fly from you.* They are like Witches, if you give them nothing, they can do you no hurt; or like Snakes, they can ſting no boſom but that which harbors them. We ſaw but the other day when the Parliament ſat, and when the Law was ſuffered to deal a little roundly with them, they began to run to corners, to truſs up their fardles, and look out for a fair wind. Wherefore if you but receive this Exhortation to judg rightly of things, you will ſee through all their arts, pull off their vizards, rub off their paints, and expoſe their cheats to publick view; and not ſuffer their falſe and pitiful pretences of Loyalty to impoſe on your underſtandings any longer.

Nay, you will not only diſcern their arts and deceits in laying their Plots, but in their hiding them alſo, when God hath detected them; for all their coverings have that fault that the Prophet *Iſaiah* foretold they ſhould have, *Iſa.* 28. 20. where the Prophet ſpeaking of the coverings of the wicked, ſaith, *That they are nar-*

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*vewer than that they can wrap themſelves in it.* For let them pull their coverings never ſo cloſe and cunningly about them, yet ſome part or other always appears to evince the truth of their guilt. They played the fool a great while to bubble all mankind that there was no Plot; but when his Majeſty with two Parliaments, and at leaſt twenty Proclamations, had declared it not only a Plot, but a Damnable and Helliſh Plot too, and that every week or two brought in freſh Witneſſes, and further diſcoveries, and the people pinched them upon their unanſwerable point, If it be no Plot, then we hope Sir *Edmundbury Godfrey* is alive; for his Murder, and no Plot are ſuch contrarieties in nature, that he which believes the one, muſt (do what he can) believe the other alſo. And when they ſaw this ſhamm would do no good, they dropt it, and had recourſe to other cheats, and were content to let it be a Plot, ſo it might be a *Presbyterian* one. And if now at laſt they ſhall endeavour to obſtruct the proceedings of Juſtice, it is but like applying Pidgeons to the feet, a remedy next door to the neck-verſe, it will be a comfort to ſee that their wickedneſs cannot ſtand any longer alone in judgment without this art to ſupport it; but it would be a horrible ſhame that ſuch Popiſh Villany ſhould get any Proteſtant ſupporters. But Naturaliſts ſay, *Corruptio optimorum peſſima eſt*; and if ſo, certainly the wicked'ſt thing that the whole world hath in it, is Corruption; and you will be ſomewhat of my mind if you but read and conſider the dreadfulleſt judgment that you find recorded in all the Word of God, *Mic.* 3 *ult.* *Therefore,* ſays the Prophet, *for your ſakes ſhall Zion be plowed as a field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become heaps, and the mountain of the houſe as the high places of the forreſt.* Good Father! what monſtrous wretches are theſe! that for their ſakes *Zion* ſhould be plowed, *Jeruſalem* laid waſte, and the mountain of the Lords houſe made as a forreſt! What! all the beauty, ſafety, and glory of the Church, and Houſe of God, totally deſtroyed, and turned into a deſolate Wilderneſs, and all this for the ſake and ſins of ſome kind of men! Good Lord! what prodigious wretches muſt theſe be, that provoke the moſt merciful God for their ſakes to deal thus ſtrangely ſevere with his Church! Why, read the foregoing verſe, and you'l find in the very front and firſt rank of theſe men (if it be lawful to call them men) they are ſuch as judg for reward; and truly I did well to put in that If: for the Prophet *Zephaniah* in his 3*d* Chap. and 3*d* verſ. is ſo far from calling them men, that he calls them, *Evening wolves,*

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which are the most hungry, curst, and ravenous after their prey of any Creature whatsoever; so that take a man that judgeth for reward, and nothing can stop him: Not Religion, not Reputation, not King, not Country, nor Church, nor State, no considerations of Publick, nor of private weal, can stop his career. 'Tis a Beast of such a greedy canine insatiate appetite, that he runs over all, runs upon all, runs down all. And if you should come from this Word of God, and say this sin will lay our *Jerusalem* in heaps, they will but laugh at you, and clap you up in Gaol. Let our *Jerusalem* lye in heaps as long as it will, and our Church be made a Wilderness if it will, what care they, so they can but get gain? But we trust the Lord that hath had that mercy for the King, and that mercy for his Protestant people to deliver them thus miraculously from the Papists hands, will perfect and compleat his own Salvation, and deliver us from such Evening-wolves also; and according to his gracious Promise will bless us with Magistrates *as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning*, Isa. 1. 26.

The fourth and last Improvement of this truth, *That the wicked are Plotters, the only Plotters that the world hath in it, is of comfort to the just:*

For if it be so that the word of truth doth determine that the wicked are the only Plotters that the world hath in it, then do you be comforted in the midst of all the calumnies that are cast upon you. You have great reason to take this comfort to your selves, for you see the Lord himself hath determined the point on your side, the wicked clamor and make a mighty noise in the world, as if you were the only Plotters and disturbers thereof, but you see the righteous holy Lord hath by his Heavenly Word determined the matter past all controversie for ever for you, and says positively that 'tis the wicked, the wicked persons, and they only, that are the Plotters and disturbers of the World; bear then their reproach with comfort; for they do no more by you in this, than they have done by the righteous in all ages; what if you hear so eminent and righteous a soul as King *David* complaining, that they laid to his charge things that he knew not, as you see he doth, *Psal.* 35. 11. Can you count it much that they will lay such things to your charge? If you read the story of just and upright *Job*, you will see that sober men and his intimate friends drew up

an unjust charge against him, and will you wonder the wicked enemies do the same against you? You have a marvellous remarkable instance of this kind in *Jer.* 37. the series of it lyeth thus; The *Caldeans* besieged *Jerusalem*, but hearing that *Pharoah* King of *Egypt* was come forth with an Army, they raised the siege. The Prophet *Jeremiah* assured them from the Lord, *That for all they had raised their siege, yet the Caldeans would return and take the city*; though he would make use of the present opportunity to leave *Jerusalem*, and go dwell in the Country. Now as he was executing this honest and innocent intent, in the very Gate as he was going out, he met with one of the huffing hectoring Captains of the City, who took him and brought him back, and charged him that he was running away to the enemy; and though *Jeremiah* told him 'twas false, and that he was not going out with any such intent; yet this roaring wretch would not let him go, but brought him back to the Princes, who the Text tells you were wroth with *Jeremiah*, and smote him, and put him in prison, *vers.* 15. and in the next Chapter they are eager to put him to death, *For the Princes came unto the King and said, We beseech thee let this man be put to death, for he weakens the hands of the men of war in the city, and the hands of all the people in speaking such words unto them: For this man seeks not the welfare of this people, but their hurt*, vers. 4. This was a horrible charge, and yet this holy Prophet spake not one word to them, nor the people neither, but what he had from the mouth of the Lord; so in they thrust him into a lothsome and dirty dungeon, that he might die there; as undoubtedly he had done, had it not been for a poor *Ethiopian* that mediated for him, and took him out from thence. For the King was such a slave to those wicked Courtiers, (that carried all before them) that he durst not interpose on the behalf of this innocent and eminent Prophet, as you may read in the fifth verse. Nay, to such an abject nature, and beneath a Prince, was the spirit of this King sunk, by the conduct of this cursed crew, that adventuring to speak privately with *Jeremiah*, he was so afraid lest these damned youths should hear of their Conference, that he chargeth the Prophet in the 24*th* verse, *That no man should know of the words that had passed between them.* Well then, if so great a Prophet as *Jeremiah* could not escape the reproach of wicked men, from being charged as an enemy to, nay a fugitive from the King, and as one that sought not the welfare, but the hurt of the people; be comforted and know that you have nothing but what hath been

been the common lot and portion of all the people of God, in the reproaches and imputations that they caſt upon you.

Nor is the *Old Teſtament* only full of examples and inſtances of this kind, but the *New Teſtament* likewiſe: For the holy Apoſtle had the ſame meaſure of rage and reproach from theſe wicked Plotters (as well of this kind as all others) as the Prophets had. In *Acts* 16. you find St. *Paul* and *Silas* going to prayer, met a Damſel poſſeſſed with a Spirit of divination, which brought her Maſters much gain by ſouthſaying, this wench followed *Paul* and *Silas*, crying, *Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation; and this ſhe did many days:* at laſt St. *Paul* diſpoſſeſſed her of the Spirit, and in *verſ.* 19. *When her maſters ſaw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers, and brought them to the magiſtrates, ſaying, Theſe men do exceedingly trouble our City.* And in *verſ.* 22. *The multitude roſe up againſt them, and the magiſtrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many ſtripes upon them, they caſt them into priſon, charging the Gaoler to keep them ſafely:* So as the Prophets were accounted the troublers of the places where they came, in the *Old Teſtament*; ſo you ſee the Apoſtles loaded with the ſame charge in the new: Nay, exceeding troubleſome. *Theſe men*, ſay theſe wretches here, *exceedingly trouble our city.* And you find them reckoned ſo troubleſom at *Epheſus*, that they raiſed an uproar upon them, *Acts* 19. where you may ſee the ſame Spirit acting them for their gain, which was, their god was going, and that put them beyond all patience: For *Demetrius* layed his charge thus; *This Paul*, ſaith he, *hath perſwaded and turned away much people, ſaying, that they be no gods which are made with hands* (a mighty crime, is it not?) *ſo that our craft is in danger.* For this *Demetrius* was a Silverſmith, and one of the makers of thoſe manufactured gods that St. *Paul* decried; and ſeeing his gain upon the wing, and ready to take its flight, he was mad, and made that uproar. Nor among the *Gentiles* only that worſhipped gods of Gold and Silver, of Wood and of Stone, was this wrong apprehenſion of the Apoſtles, but amongſt the *Jews* alſo, who had the true notion of the one and only true God: For you read in *Acts* 17. that St. *Paul* and *Silas* coming to *Theſſalonica*, and finding there a Synagogue of the *Jews*, went in amongſt them, and reaſoned from the Scriptures, that Chriſt muſt needs

have ſuffered and riſen again from the dead; and that Jeſus whom they preached, was Chriſt: And 'tis ſaid, that ſome of the *Jews* believed; *but the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows, and the baſer ſort* (where by the way, you may note, that lewd fellows and the baſer ſort of people are, and ever were the enemies of Chriſt and true Chriſtians) *of theſe they gathered a company, and ſet all the city in an uproar; and when they found not Paul and Silas, they drew certain of the Brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, Theſe that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo.* And in *Acts* 24. 5. you will find the ſame Apoſtle called by *Tertullus* the Orator, *a peſtilent fellow, a mover of ſedition, a ringleader of a ſect*; and an outcry made upon him, *Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he ſhould live*, Acts 22. 22. Comfort your ſelves then, for you ſee you have no harder meaſure than the holy Apoſtles had; you can't be called worſe than they were called, nor have more, nor greater calumnies caſt upon you, than you ſee were caſt on them; and yet I am perſwaded you do believe, that notwithſtanding all this wicked rage from theſe falſe and wicked Plotters, that the holy Apoſtles were no enemies to *Ceſar*, were no troublers nor diſturbers of Governments nor People, nor no ſeditious peſtilent fellows, and unworthy to live upon the face of Gods earth, as their tumults, uproars, and curſed outcrys did accuſe them for: Nay, what if our bleſſed Lord and Saviour himſelf received no better nor fairer quarter from this wicked generation? Then I hope you will be comforted and contented with your lot, remembring that holy word, *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter, nor the Servant above his Lord: It is enough for the Diſciple to be as his Maſter, and the Servant as his Lord: If they have called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub; how much more ſhall they call them of his houſhold ſo?* Matt. 10. 24, 25. And ſee how opprobriouſly and contemptuouſly they called our Lord ſo, *Matt.* 12. 24. *They ſaid, This fellow doth not caſt out Devils, but by the help of Beelzebub the prince of Devils. And* in St. *Luke* 23. 2. *they accuſe him, ſaying, we found this fellow perverting the nation.* And *Joh.* 9. 29. *We know,* ſay they, *that God ſpake by Moſes; but as for this fellow* (ſpeaking of our Lord) *we know not whence he is.* And can you be treated at a courſer or more inſulting rate than this? Be comforted therefore, as thoſe that have but the ſame ſalvage and brutiſh uſage, as the holy Prophets, Apoſtles, and our moſt holy and bleſſed Lord himſelf had from them.

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And comfort your ſelves, not only becauſe God hath determined for you in his word, but becauſe God will determine for you alſo, by his providences here, or by his judgments hereafter; and this comfort is annexed here to the Text: For after the Pſalmiſt had told us, *That the wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and gnaſheth upon him with his teeth*; he adds for our comfort in the very next words, *The Lord ſhall laugh at him, for he ſeeth that his day is coming. I have ſeen*, ſays the Prophet in this *Pſalm*, *the wicked in great power, and ſpreading himſelf like a green bay-tree.* All his wickedneſs had a Lawrel on it; well, and what then? One would think that now he and his wickedneſs were ſecure enough; but no ſuch matter, for in the very next verſe they are both vaniſhed, *I ſought him*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *but he could not be found*, verſ. 35, 36. You ſee his Lawrels were ſoon withered, and all his green and flouriſhing eſtate blaſted into nothing. In the beginning of this *Pſalm* the *Pſalmiſt* exhorts us not to fret our ſelves becauſe of evil-doers; a pretty hard duty, and ſuch as even juſt *Lot* could hardly bring his mind to a thorough compliance with; for the Apoſtle *Peter* tells you, *That his righteous ſoul was vexed from day to day with the filthy converſation of the wicked Sodomites*, 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. Well, but what argument doth the Prophet urge this duty upon us with, that we ſhould not fret at the wicked? why the very ſame that we are upon here, *For they ſhall ſoon be cut down as graſs*, ſaith he, *and wither as the green herb*, verſ. 2. And in the 10th verſe, *Yet a little while and the wicked ſhall not be; yea, thou ſhalt diligently conſider his place, and it ſhall not be.* Neither their perſons nor their places, nor nothing ſhall be left; but one and t'other, and all cut down and dried up and withered; nay, their very name and memory ſhall rot; they ſtank when they were above ground, and they rot when they are under it; and therefore you find the Royal Prophet praiſing God that he had deſtroyed the wicked, and put out their name for ever and ever. *Pſal.* 9. 5. Men value their names next their lives (and in ſome caſes before them too) and therefore they venture upon mighty things, that their names may live, and that there may be a fame upon their memory; why even this ſhall be put out, and not put out to revive again, but the Lord ſhall put it out for ever and ever. A man would think if any could be ſecure from this, it ſhould be thoſe wicked ones ſpoken of in *Pſal.* 73. 7. concerning whom 'tis ſaid, *That they had more than heart could wiſh.* To have as much

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as heart can wish, is pretty well; but to have more than heart can wish, certainly must mightily secure its owners; and yet by and by you see those over-grown wicked wretches that had more than heart could wish, cast down by God into destruction, verse the 18*th*. And the *Psalmist* bursting out into admiration of Gods Providence thus in the 19*th* verse, *How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!* As well he might; What! men that had more than their very heart could wish but just now, and thus all of the sudden in a very moment brought into desolation! Certainly, we may well cry out with the Apostle, *Oh how unsearchable are the judgments of God! and his ways past finding out*, Rom. 11. 33. Why, here's a strange winding up of their wickedness, a marvellous Catastrophe. Those that insulted but now at such a wonderful rate, over the holy Prophets, Apostles, and even Christ himself, that followed up our Lord, and followed up his followers, and that reckoned him and them but as the filth and dregs of the world, and that esteemed them but Mechanicks, and the very off-scouring of all things; and what is all this huff and rant come to this already? O what reason have you then to receive this comfort? and to say, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways thou King of Saints?* For there are many Promises that the righteous shall see these stupendious operations of the Load, as *Psal.* 52. 6. *The righteous shall see and shall laugh at them.* And *Psal.* 107. 42. *The righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.* It will be their turn then to clap their hands and to shout for joy. For then all the upright in heart shall glory. It may be the blessed God by his gracious Providence may order it so, that even here your mouths may be filled with laughter, and your tongues with singing. But however, we are sure it will be hereafter, when God shall burn up all these wicked dross of the earth with unquenchable fire, that have plotted against the just. Wherefore I conclude my Discourse with the Exhortation of the Apostle to the *Thessalonians*, in the first Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, the 4*th* Chapter, and the last verse, *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

Now to God only wise be Glory through Jesus Christ for ever, *Amen.*

*FINIS.*

XUM